

An Identity Commentary on the Gospel of Mark

And looking up he said "I see men, that as trees I see walking!" [Mark 8:24]

The Gospel of Mark - Part 7: Changes and Transitions

The miraculous deeds of Christ are a primary focus of Mark's action-paced account, and thus far we have already seen examples of the casting out of demons, the lifting of maladies, the cleansing of lepers and the raising of paralytics, but only pieces of the teachings of Christ. Now as we continue with Mark, we will see more of His discourses, beginning with His engagement with the scribes under the roof of the apostle Matthew's home.

Continuing with Mark 2:

2:13 And He went out again by the sea, and all the crowd (2:4) came with Him, and He taught them.

This verse is unique to Mark.

The previous account left off with Christ healing the paralytic in a house so crowded there was no space, "[not even there by the door](#)", and that crowd is the same one coming with Him here as He leaves Capernaum. The crowd was astounded after witnessing His unprecedented work and would have been eager to follow Him, much like the people were the morning after Yahshua cast out the demon in the assembly hall, when Simon and those with him expressed to Christ that "[they all seek You!](#)"¹

The Prince rewards the crowd for their devotion by continuing to teach them the Word, and in Mark 10 we see that Yahshua was accustomed to doing this, where he writes "[And arising from there He goes into the borders of Judaea and on the other side of the Jordan, and the crowds again come together to Him, and as He is accustomed, again He taught them.](#)"² As we quoted more than once in our previous commentary, "[for those seeking Him, He becomes a rewarder.](#)"³

We presented compelling evidence in the previous commentary that the houses of Mark 2:1, 3:19, and 7:13, are all the same home of Peter and Andrew, which would suggest that the crowd (ὁ ὄχλος) surrounding the house "[again](#)" at 3:19 is either the same one here or a crowd gathered again under similar circumstances. On that note, Mark uses the word "[again](#)" (πάλιν)⁴ to describe Christ going somewhere or doing something more often than any other gospel writer.

Matthew and Luke never once employ πάλιν this way in their longer literary gospels, but it is used by Mark at least nine times,⁵ usually in reference to something which happened recently in the narrative. It is another example of the evocative language we should come to expect from this campfire gospel, much like his use of the word "[immediately](#)" (εὐθέως).⁶ In this case Mark's use of the word πάλιν here at 2:13 nods back to 1:16 in the narrative:

Mark 1:16 And passing by the sea of Galilaia He saw Simon and Andreas the brother of Simon casting around nets in the sea, for they were fishermen.

It isn't mentioned by Mark or Matthew, but Luke informs us that Yahshua was standing upon Peter's fishing vessel and teaching on that day, where the beloved physician writes: "[And boarding one of the vessels, which was Simon's, He asked him to set out a little from the land, and sitting He taught the crowds from the vessel.](#)"⁷ This practice is also evident in Matthew and Mark's account of the parables by the sea, where for example in Mark 4 we read "[And again He began to teach by the sea, and a very](#)

¹ Mark 1:37 [...]

² Mark 10:1

³ Hebrews 11:6 [...]

⁴ #3825

⁵ Mark 2:1, 13, 3:1, 20, 4:1, 7:31, 8:13, 10:1, 10:32, 11:27

⁶ #2112

⁷ Luke 5:13

large crowd gathers to Him, so as for Him boarding into a vessel to sit in the sea, and all the crowd was by the sea upon the land.”⁸Mark alone gives us a hint as to why Yahshua was regularly disposed to standing upon vessels, where he writes in the third chapter that “He spoke to His students in order that a boat should be waiting ready for Him, for reason that the crowd would crush Him.”⁹

Our Prince was a phenomenon, and perhaps He was teaching from a vessel here also, after all the *entire* crowd which was pressing around the house came with Him and their excitement was likely electrified after the sign.

2:14 And going by He saw Levei the son of Alphaios sitting at the tax-office, and He says to him "Follow Me!" And arising he followed Him.

The name of Levi's father is only mentioned here in Mark.

The tax-collector is called Levi by both Mark and Luke, but he indirectly identifies himself by his more famous name in his own gospel, where he writes “And Yahshua passing from there sees a man sitting at the tax office, called Maththaios”. This Levi is the apostle Matthew, and it was not uncommon for men to have more than one name.¹⁰

I wonder if Levi might have been a more intimate name of endearment, while Matthew was the name he was more recognized by as an apostle. This would explain why Mark and Luke, calling him Levi in their accounts of his calling, afterwards go on to call him Matthew in their lists of the apostles.¹¹ Then Matthew, as an apostle delivering a gospel, would naturally choose to identify himself by that name in his own account.

Levi means *attached*, according to Strong's Concordance (#H3878), and it is of course the same name as the son of Jacob who was the patriarch of the eponymous tribe, to which Matthew actually might have belonged. The possibility doesn't stem from his name alone but also from the fact that he was a tax collector, as it was the role of the Levites in the ancient kingdom of Israel to collect the tithe. Sons were usually raised from a young age to follow in the footsteps of their fathers and take on their vocations; (of course, with so much time having passed since the ancient kingdom, it was not necessarily the case that Matthew's father Alphaeus was a tax-collector).

There might be a third indication, however, as Levites were often scribes in former times (Ezra being one notable example).¹²This tradition appears to have persisted to some extent, given that the historian Flavius Josephus was a Levite, and also since Luke informs us that Barnabas was a Levite, whose cousin John Mark was Peter's transcriber and the author of this gospel account. It would be fitting then for Matthew as a Levite to be the first to sit down and record a detailed narrative of the ministry of Yahshua Christ, and there is a strong possibility that two of the gospels were penned by that tribe if Mark was a Levite also. It is all very interesting, but Matthew's lineage will likely never be known for certain in this life.

Only Mark mentions that Matthew's father is Alphaeus. It is a Hellenized name believed to be derived from the Hebrew noun *chéleph*, which is also the name of a Naphtalite city mentioned once in Joshua 19:19. The proximity of Matthew's tax-office to Capernaum placed it within the ancient territory of Naphtali,¹³as Matthew writes in his gospel: “And leaving Nazareth, having come He settled in Kapharnaoum by the sea in the regions of Zaboulon and Nephthalim.”¹⁴

That said, I wouldn't necessarily assume that Matthew was a Naphtalite just because of his father's name, as the tribe of Naphtali was largely scattered abroad by the time of Christ, and the vast majority of Israelites in Galilee would have been of the tribes of Benjamin, Levi and Judah. The name Alphaeus may have survived as the fleeting heritage of the ancient city once found in Galilee, or perhaps it was a

⁸ Mark 4:1

⁹ Mark 3:9 [...]

¹⁰ Matthew 9:9 [...]

¹¹ Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13

¹² 1 Chronicles 24:6, 2 Chronicles 34:13, Ezra 7:6

¹³ #H2500

¹⁴ Matthew 4:13

common Hebrew name, as even the second husband of Mary had that name and he was certainly not a Naphtalite.

If anything, there's a subtle chance that the name Alphaeus may actually be a fourth indication that Matthew was of the tribe of Levi. The Hebrew noun *chêleph* means *exchange*, and the noun only appears twice in Numbers 18, in reference to how the Levites were given tithes *in exchange* for their inheritance and permitted to eat a remnant of their contributions made through those tithes *in exchange* for their service in the tabernacle of the congregation. And then, of course, Matthew is a tax collector.

Numbers 18:21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for (*chêleph*) an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

It should also be added that the names of Matthew and his father Alphaeus can be seen to work together to form a prophetic narrative of the apostle's gospel and its testimonies. The noun *chêleph* (#2500) is itself derived from the verb *châlaph* (#2498), which is often used to refer to the *passing* or *transition* of things, or even a *changing*. One example is in Genesis where Jacob told his household and those with him to “Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change (*châlaph*) your garments:”¹⁵ The changing of garments is an ancient idiom for turning away from sin and apostasy, appearing elsewhere in Scripture such as in the Revelation where Christ said to the assembly in Sardis: “But you have a few names in Sardeis which have not soiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, because they are worthy.”¹⁶ Later in this account we will see Christ calling sinners to repentance under the roof of Matthew the son of *Alphaeus*' house, and through such repentance they would indeed *change* their garments.

But not everyone repents of their errors beforehand and *changes* their garments in this life, which is why Paul wrote to Timothy that “The errors of some men are manifest beforehand, going ahead to judgment, but others then follow after.”¹⁷ For those whose errors follow after, they certainly repent and “change their garments” in death, and that is why the apostle John saw a vision of a great multitude of the children of Israel:

Revelation 7:14 And I said to him: "My lord, you know!" And he said to me: "These are they coming from out of the great tribulation and they have washed their robes and have whitened them in the blood of the Lamb.

All of the seed of Israel is saved in Christ without exception, and because of Him “to each there will be approval from Yahweh” in the end, as Paul said to the Corinthians.¹⁸ The propitiation is on account of their racial seed, which means that an Israelite is covered from death whether they are cognizant of it or not; and at any time they can choose to wash their garments in the blood of the lamb in repentance and actually walk worthily of that calling. This salvation and the opportunity to walk worthily of it is a gift, and Matthew means *gift of Yahweh*, his gospel being a record of how that gift was freely given to Israel. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “For in favor you are being preserved through faith [the unconditional promises to Abraham] and this, Yahweh's gift, is not of yourselves, not from works, lest anyone would boast”¹⁹ So we see a narrative here in the names of Matthew and his father Alphaeus.

The verb *châlaph* can also refer to a renewal, and perhaps another prophetic connection can be found in the words of Job: “For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.”²⁰ This may remind us of the prophecy of Christ in Isaiah, where after the cutting down of the forests (people) with iron, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”²¹ This is the restoration of the tabernacle of David which was prophesied of in Amos, and the fulfillment of this *sprouting again* (*châlaph*) is evident in the opening line of Matthew's gospel, where the apostle prefaces his record of Christ's

¹⁵ Genesis 35:2 [...]

¹⁶ Revelation 3:4

¹⁷ 1 Timothy 5:24

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 4:5[...]

¹⁹ Ephesians 2:8-9

²⁰ Job 14:7

²¹ Isaiah 11:1

family tree by saying “[A book of descent of Yahshua Christ son of David son of Abraham](#)”²² This is how the cut down tree sprouted forth anew.

So we can see how the names of Matthew and his father testify towards the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, and even the name Levi means *attached*. Since Matthew was by all accounts the first book of the New Testament to be written, perhaps his second name is prophetic of how the Old and New Testaments should be attached in the minds of Christians, who understand them to be one single Book of Life.

We’ll conclude by saying that since the verb *châlahph* can imply the transition from one state to another, perhaps the name Alphaeus also foreshadows the coming discourse concerning new wine (new understanding) under Matthew’s roof. As for the noun *chêleph*, its other appearance in Numbers 18 was in reference to how the Levites were to eat a remnant of their contributions. Indeed Christ will later be dining under Matthew’s roof, but the true food for the children of Israel is Himself, as He is the Bread of Life which saved Israel, and the Word which nourishes their spirits.

Now the word for *tax-office* is *τελώνιον*²³ and is defined by Liddell and Scott as a *customs* or *duty* house; it only appears thrice in the gospels, being solely found in each synoptic’s respective account of Matthew’s calling. It would appear that Matthew’s tax-office was by the sea near Capernaum, as Mark writes that Christ was *going by* (*παράγω*),²⁴ and so perhaps one of its purposes was to toll any incoming goods being brought in by the vessels. The taxes which Matthew collected were part of the larger Roman system: the immediate beneficiary would have been the tetrarch Herod Antipas, with Rome receiving its share indirectly through tribute.

The account of Matthew’s calling is brief in all three synoptic gospels, but that doesn’t mean the event was as short as it appears in the narrative. The gospels—and the Biblical books as a whole—are often concise, focusing only on the details we are permitted to know and which are necessary for our edification. As we saw earlier, while the second recorded calling of Andrew, Simon, and the sons of Zebedee appears quite brief in Matthew and Mark, it is revealed in Luke’s account reveals that Yahshua was actually teaching the crowds at the time and even performed a miracle which had brought Peter to his knees. The actual history behind these events is much wider and deeper than what the terse writings may inform us, so it is quite possible that much more happened than Yahshua simply walking into the tax-office and saying, “[Follow Me](#)”. It is also possible that it really was this direct, and that Matthew was another sheep desperately anxious to seek out His shepherd. How could we ever know for sure until we reach the Kingdom and those who were there relate their memories to us?

It is also assumed that this was the first time Matthew met Yahshua in an earthly sense, as his gospel does not mention any prior relationship before his calling, but we shouldn’t even take *that* for granted. He rightly wrote his gospel in a humbling and anonymous way, so he shies away from drawing any unnecessary attention to himself and keeps the spotlight shining brightly on Christ alone. If he lived in or around Capernaum then it is important to remember that Yahshua settled there probably at least around one year previous to this calling, and it is doubtful that Matthew was ignorant of the man who was being sought after by the entire city, in this case for days on end.²⁵ It is interesting that he was not among the crowd in the house, but this could easily have been due to his responsibilities as a tax collector.

Whatever Matthew’s history was, something clearly left a profound impression on this genuine racial Israelite without guile, for despite any obligations or ties to his work, he willingly abandoned everything for the sake of Christ. Luke adds this detail where he writes “[And abandoning everything rising up he followed Him.](#)”²⁶

As we’ve said, the words of the Bible are terse and deliberately chosen by the Spirit, so perhaps there is one last type which we can mention here. Matthew is sitting down and engaged in a role that can be likened to fulfilling a Levite’s duties; yet, when Yahshua calls him, he rises to follow Christ and leaves

²² Matthew 1:1

²³ #G5058

²⁴ #G3855

²⁵ Mark 2:1

²⁶ Luke 5:28

that role behind. This could mirror how the weak and unprofitable rituals of the Levitical priesthood (*Levi*) were done away with and replaced (*Alphaeus*) with a new and better type of service. Yahshua Christ is our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and because of Him, all of Israel as priests of their own households are called to perform their own services to God, not in dead rituals but in the keeping of His commandments through the care of brethren, just as Christ Himself explained and demonstrated to us.²⁷

Looking after widows and orphans, tending to the sick, visiting the imprisoned, these are things we do in service to our racial kinsmen as priests offering spiritual sacrifices. So this figure of the *change* in priesthood is perhaps the most explicit type in the names of Levi and his father Alphaeus. As Paul wrote, “For the priesthood being changed, from necessity a change of law happens also.”²⁸ [There is a change in law because with the Levitical priesthood being replaced there is no longer any need for the Levitical rites and rituals. The moral laws are eternal, however.]

Compounding several aspects of the writings together can illustrate a profound picture of Levi rising up from his chair. Yahshua told Levi, “follow Me”, and being called ourselves we can follow Christ in His example of spiritual service. As Yahshua said, “For even the Son of Man has come not to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for the sake of many.”²⁹ Those who follow in His steps are priests to their God offering spiritual sacrifices, and such things were prophesied in Isaiah, where Yahweh said “And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites”;³⁰ something which Peter later expounded on when he wrote to sojourning Israelites that they were as living stones “built a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices [good deeds for our brethren] acceptable to Yahweh through Yahshua Christ.”³¹ And so in *Matthew*—also called *Levi*, the son of *Alphaeus*—we see a microcosm of this *change* in *priesthood* and thus *service*, which was given to all of Israel as a *gift* apart from works.

Revelation 5:9-10 and they sang a new song, saying "You are worthy to receive the scroll and to open its seven seals, because You have been slaughtered and You have purchased for Yahweh with Your blood out of each tribe and tongue and people and nation and have made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they shall rule over the earth!"

2:15 And it comes to pass upon His reclining in his house that many tax collectors and wrongdoers were reclining together with Yahshua and His students. There were many indeed, and they followed Him.

The final clause is unique to Mark: “There were many indeed, and they followed Him.”

Luke writes in his record of these things that “Levi made a great reception for Him at his house” and his ability to hold such a reception suggests that he was at-least somewhat wealthy.³² Many tax collectors amassed wealth through dishonest means, but Matthew was not necessarily one of them, as the pious and charitable chief tax-collector Zacchaeus was still wealthy despite having abstained from extortion. It was a trade which allowed even its honest practitioners to make a decent income. John the Baptist advised tax collectors to take no more than what was appointed to them, and there were men who did indeed work the vocation with such dignity, such as Zaccheus who said to Christ, “Behold, half of my property, Prince, I give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything of anyone, I return it fourfold!”³³

Now some might point toward all of the sinners gathered and Yahshua’s later statement of *having come to call wrongdoers* as a hint that Matthew was one of them. It is possible. After all, if Matthew ostensibly invited these wrongdoers then it is likely that he associated with them. But no conclusion can be made without clear evidence, and if Matthew *was* a wrongdoer, then he obviously repented and went on to do good works. That is what matters.

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²⁸ Hebrews 7:12

²⁹ Mark 10:45

³⁰ Isaiah 66:21 [...]

³¹ 1 Peter 2:5 [...]

³² Luke 5:29 [...]

³³ Luke 19:8 [...]

Reclining is *κατάκειμαι*³⁴ and literally means to *lie down*, while *reclining together* is *συνανάκειμαι*,³⁵ meaning to *recline together*, and both can implicitly refer to reclining to eat, as they do so here. The ancient Greeks ate their meals reclining on couches and not at tables, and such was the custom throughout the oikumene at the time.

The students reclining with Christ could have easily included others in addition to the twelve which He later named *ambassadors* (*apostles*). The designation *students* is often contextually used in reference to the apostles, but it is not by its nature exclusive, and Christ had many other followers such as the seventy-two He sent before His face near the end of His ministry.³⁶ Just earlier in the narrative, a great crowd had followed Him out of Capernaum, and we can't imagine that with all these throngs of people following Him around that none of them ever became His students. Rather, it is evident in the gospel that many men were often eager to follow Christ, such as at Matthew 8:18-22.

The final clause is unique to Mark: “**There were many indeed, and they followed (ἀκολουθέω - #190) Him.**” Indeed, Matthew is one of those people following Him! As we read in the previous verse, “**and He says to him "Follow (#190) Me!" And arising he followed (#190) Him.**” The word *ἀκολουθέω* joins the particle *a* (representing union) with *keleuthos* (road); so it is properly to be in the *same way with* or to *accompany*, and when used figuratively it would represent discipleship. Thus Yahshua used the same word when He called Simon, Andrew, the sons of Zebedee, Philip, and others. And just as Matthew “abandoned everything” to follow Him on this figurative road (Luke 5:28), so did the other apostles, who remained with Christ through all the trials of that journey, such as after the Bread of Life and otherwise.³⁷ Therefore Peter, near the end of Christ’s ministry said, “**Look, we have left everything and have followed (#190) You!**”³⁸ Those who are not willing to do such things are not ready for the Kingdom of Yahweh.³⁹

In our own peculiar circumstances it does not necessarily mean forsaking our vocations as the apostles did, as we haven’t been called to that same opportunity and must provide for our kin, but it does involve those spiritual sacrifices which we discussed earlier. This is the self-sacrifice Christ demands when He said, “**If anyone wishes to come behind Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross each day, and he must follow (#190) Me!**”⁴⁰ Christ served His brethren, and in following Him, we must do the same. Self-denial means putting your racial kinsmen first before your own personal desires or well being, and there are countless ways to serve your brethren—even something as small as giving a little one a cup of cold water to drink.⁴¹ In serving our brethren, we serve Christ, as is evident in the parable of the sheep and goat nations and also in Christ’s words to Peter and to Paul.⁴² Therefore, Christ also said, “**If one would serve Me, he must follow (#190) Me, and where I am, there also My servant shall be! If one should serve Me, the Father shall honor him!**”⁴³

So Mark writes that “**There were many indeed, and they followed Him.**” - and the wayward sheep adjusting their course are an example that any child of Israel can repent and choose to walk this road with their Master. When Christ rules in His Kingdom and conforms the Society to His law with an iron rod, there will be more than just *many* following Him - all the seed of Israel will follow Him in righteousness, even if they were formerly in-obstinate wrongdoers. As it is written in Isaiah, “**For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**”⁴⁴ and in Habakkuk that “**the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.**”⁴⁵ At this time the word which Yahweh swore by Himself will be fulfilled, “**That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.**”⁴⁶ But even before the final fulfillment, all wrongdoers

³⁴ #G2621

³⁵ #G4873

³⁶ Luke 10:1

³⁷ Luke 22:28, John 6:66-71

³⁸ Matthew 19:27 [...]

³⁹ Luke 9:61-62

⁴⁰ Luke 9:23 [...]

⁴¹ Matthew 10:42

⁴² Matthew 25:40, John 21:15-17, Acts 9:4-5, *see also Galatians 4:14*

⁴³ John 12:26

⁴⁴ Isaiah 26:19 [...]

⁴⁵ Habakkuk 2:14 [...]

⁴⁶ Isaiah 45:23

of Israel certainly do repent in death and wash their robes in the blood of the lamb. As we before cited, John beheld “A great crowd, which to number it no one was able”⁴⁷ - “There were many indeed.”

The wayward sheep are hearing the voice of their Shepherd and following Him. They may be wrongdoers but they still hear His voice regardless, for the capacity to hear Christ is a matter of bearing the genetic Adamic Spirit and not of works. As Christ said “My sheep [the house of Israel] hear My voice, and I know them and they follow (#190) Me,”⁴⁸

We will see that the tax-collectors following Christ offended the self-righteous among the Pharisees, who were apparently “persuaded by themselves, that they are righteous and despisers of everyone else”.⁴⁹

2:16 And the scribes of the Pharisees seeing that He eats with the wrongdoers and tax-collectors said to His students that "He eats with tax collectors and wrongdoers?"

Some manuscripts have 'the scribes and the Pharisees'

Tax collectors were despised by most people because they were notorious for exacting more than they were committed and pocketing the difference. For example, Cicero, in his series of speeches titled *In Verrem* (Against Verres), describes how a corrupt tax collector named Apronius extorted a Sicilian city by demanding an excessive “compliment” of 33,000 medimni of wheat, nearly enough to feed the city for a month. [2.3.72] Their reputation for doing such things is why John the Baptist instructed the tax-collectors to “not exact any more than that which is appointed to you.”, and the instructions were how he called that portion of the stubborn mountain of Zion to smooth themselves in repentance.

There were pious tax-collectors in the Society who did not feast on extortion and in fear upheld the principles which John the Baptist encouraged, but because of their vocation’s general reputation for thievery, many were regarded as wrongdoers even if they themselves were innocent. An example is in the Gospel: when Yahshua called the pious chief tax collector Zacchaeus so that He could dine with him at his house, we read that many accused Yahshua of going off to lodge with a sinful man. But Zacchaeus was not a thief, and so he defended himself against these accusations, saying to Yahshua that “Behold, half of my property, Prince, I give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything of anyone, I return it fourfold!”.⁵⁰ (Thieves are often commanded in the law to make restitution by paying back double, but there are certain circumstances where more is demanded to be paid, or that the thief is to repay in servitude if they unable to produce the funds.)⁵¹

The Pharisees should not have judged Matthew or Zacchaeus or anyone based on their stature as tax-collectors, but they should have judged a righteous judgement on the foundation of two or three witnesses.⁵² As Christ said “Do not judge by sight, but judge a righteous judgment”.⁵³ But perhaps there were planks in their hypocritical eyes which prevented them from judging righteously, because Luke writes that after Christ finished giving the parable of the unrighteous steward, that “And hearing all these things the Pharisees being lovers of money then scorned Him.”⁵⁴ Such greediness among the Pharisees is manifest in how they would say 'He who should swear by the temple, it is nothing. But he who should swear by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.' - but Christ rebuked them for their attitude and said “Foolish and blind men! For what is greater, the gold or the temple which sanctifies the gold?”⁵⁵ So the Pharisees had a reputation for greediness, yet they thought themselves to be more righteous than the tax-collectors who actually displayed repentant attitudes? As Yahshua said to them many times, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Revelation 7:9 [...]

⁴⁸ John 10:27

⁴⁹ Luke 18:9 [...]

⁵⁰ Luke 19:7-10 [...]

⁵¹ Exodus 22

⁵² Matthew 18:15-16

⁵³ John 7:24 (Leviticus 19:15)

⁵⁴ Luke 16:14

⁵⁵ Matthew 23:16-17

⁵⁶ Matthew 27

Many of the Pharisees were Edomites (*not all - it was a party and not a race*), and the Edomites among them would have certainly been greedy on account of their wicked origin. Peter wrote that the descendants of the fallen angels have “[hearts exercised for greediness](#)”.⁵⁷ Even Judas Iscariot was a thief. They cannot change. A family tree is known by its fruits. The Edomites will remain entrenched in their trades of usury and pornography until they’re thrown into the Lake of Fire and the world is rid of the evils they’ve authored.

One of the ways in which such Edomite devils satisfy their greedy hearts is through devouring the poor, and Solomon bore witness to their ways where he wrote in Proverbs: “[There is a generation \[race\], whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.](#)”⁵⁸ Therefore, Christ rebuked the racial vipers among the Pharisees and said to them “[Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but the insides are filled from rapine \(ἀρπαγή\) and incontinence!](#)”⁵⁹ The word *rapine* (ἀρπαγή) is the violent seizure of one’s property, and Christ’s rebuke of these vipers burning up His vineyard was prophesied of in the prophet Isaiah, where it says in the Septuagint, “[Yahweh Himself shall come into judgement with the elders of the people, and with their rulers: Now why have you set on fire My vineyard? Even the rapine \(ἀρπαγή\) of the poor man is in your houses.](#)” (*a personal translation of Isaiah 3:14 LXX*).

Another fair translation of ἀρπαγή would be *extortion*. These *scribes of the Pharisees* here in Mark might have appeared righteous before men, but many of them were thieves who devoured the houses of widows and extorted the poor just as much as any tax-collector! Christ is recorded in the gospel of Luke as having said:

Luke 20:46-47 "[Beware of the scribes who wish to walk about in robes and love the greetings in the markets and the first benches in the assembly halls and the best seats at the dinners. They devour the houses of widows and in pretense they pray at length. They shall receive much greater judgment.](#)"

Hypocrites! And there were many other ways in which the Pharisees displayed such flagrant hypocrisy, our friend William Finck said it well in his commentaries of Matthew and Luke: “*The Pharisees were just as unforgiving religiously as the publicans were when it came to collecting taxes.*”

Sometimes the most interesting details are the ones which are easy to miss: because there is another Edomite trait being displayed here. We should take note that the scribes of the Pharisees made their remarks to the students and not directly to their Teacher Himself, suggesting that they were trying to sow seeds of strife and doubt among Yahshua’s following. The Edomites have always sought to undermine the institutions which they are unable to destroy outright, it is a trait of their cursed race, and so Jude wrote concerning their family tree, “[These are those making divisions, animals, not having the Spirit.](#)”⁶⁰

There is no doubt that the Pharisees were seeking to sow divisions, and later in the account they even rally their attack by directly criticizing Yahshua and His students for not fasting. Yahshua would cite both such criticisms later in His ministry when the tax-collectors repented but the Pharisees and lawyers refused to accept such counsel. In that instance He identified His critics as “[this race,](#)” which essentially confirms that those individuals belonged to the wicked family tree, and the parable’s theme strongly suggests that these scribes of the Pharisees were also. Animals making divisions indeed! This is what happens whenever wolves enter the sheepfold.

Luke 7:29-35 [And all the people heard, and the tax-collectors deemed Yahweh just, being immersed in the immersion of Iohannes. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of Yahweh in regard to themselves, not being immersed by him. "So to what do I compare the men of this race? And what are they like? They are like boys sitting in the market place and calling to one another things which say 'We piped for you and you did not dance. We sang dirges and you did not weep.' For Iohannes the Baptist came not eating wheat-bread nor drinking wine and you say 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man](#)

⁵⁷ 2 Peter 2:14

⁵⁸ Proverbs 30:14

⁵⁹ Matthew 23:25

⁶⁰ Jude 1:19

came eating and drinking, and you say 'Behold the man is a glutton and a winedrinker, a friend of tax-collectors and wrongdoers!' And Wisdom is justified by all of her children. "

The tax collectors were willing to listen to Christ. They were willing to eat with Him. And they were able to repent of their ways because they were His sheep bearing the genetic Adamic Spirit which gave them the ability to hear His voice. Meanwhile, the Pharisees, believing themselves righteous but being filled with dead men's bones, vainly attempted to rebuke Christ for dining with tax collectors and wrongdoers. They might have appeared beautiful on the outside, but they were animals without the Adamic Spirit, incapable of hearing the voice of God, and their murmuring and attempts to sow division proved that they were born of fornication.

We will discuss one last thing, because some might think this account contradicts the words of Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, where he writes concerning Christ:

Hebrews 7:26 Such as He is also a distinguished high priest for us: devout, innocent, undefiled, separating Himself from wrongdoers, and having become higher than the heavens;

Paul was not saying that Yahshua did not keep physical company with sinners, but that He separated Himself from their ways and exhorted them to repent. We will see this in the following verse of Mark, but we should preface by saying that just because Yahshua dined with wrongdoers doesn't mean that we should do the same. James wrote that "Yahweh is not able to be tempted by evil"⁶¹ But we are corruptible man. We bear our struggles with the flesh and must remember who we are in the equation. A little leaven leavens the entire dough, and so we should have "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead even reprove them."⁶² The apostles urged Christians to remain separate from wrongdoers and they did not teach anything in contradiction to Christ. For example, Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 5:9-13 I had written to you in the letter, not to associate with fornicators: not at all with the fornicators of this Society, or with the covetous, or rapacious, or idolaters, seeing that you are therefore obliged to come out from the Society. But presently I have written to you not to associate with any brother if he is being designated a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or abusive, or drunken, or rapacious; not even to eat with such a wretch. What is it to me to judge those outside? Not at all should you judge those within you. But those outside Yahweh judges; "you will expel the wicked from amongst yourselves."⁶³

Being called to come out from the society and being susceptible to temptation, we as followers of Christ should not eat with the wretched nor condone their evil works.

2:17 And hearing it Yahshua says to them that "The strong have no need of a physician, but the sick do have. I have not come to call the righteous, but wrongdoers!"

Near the end of His ministry, Yahshua gave a parable contrasting the repentance of the tax collectors and whores among the children of Israel with the hypocrisy and feigned obedience of the Edomite portion of the Pharisees and high priests. Following this, He delivered a second parable concerning His imminent Passion, in which He explicitly identified these Pharisees and high priests as being liable for His imminent death and for the murders of the former prophets, thereby confirming them as descendants of Cain. Matthew records, "Hearing His parables, the high priests and the Pharisees knew that He speaks concerning them" (Matthew 21:45). While we will not discuss the second parable here, this statement confirms that the first parable is indeed relevant to the hypocrisy of this wicked race, and it reads:

Matthew 21:28-32 Now what do you suppose? A man had two sons, and having come forth to the first he said: 'Son, go, today you must work in the vineyard.' But he responding said 'I do not want to', but regretting it later he went. Then coming forth to the other he spoke likewise. And responding he said "I shall, master', yet he had not gone. Who out of the two sons has done the will of the father?" They say "the first!" Yahshua says to them: "Truly I say to you that the tax-collectors and the whores shall go

⁶¹ James 1:13

⁶² Ephesians 5:11

⁶³ Deuteronomy 17:7 (Paul's Greek is nearly identical to the LXX)

into the kingdom of Yahweh before you! For Iohannes came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the whores believed him! And you seeing it have not later repented for which to believe him!

These scribes of the Pharisees would have done well to refrain from their arrogance and to change *their* attitude and repent as the tax-collectors and wrongdoers did, but being animals without the Adamic Spirit, they did not possess the racial ability to do so on account of their wicked and corrupt origin. And so Yahshua did not exhort these scribes of the Pharisees who were sowing strife with their sharp tongues to repent, nor did He invite them to eat with Him, for He knew the wicked seed which was inside of them. As John wrote, He “[had no need that anyone testify concerning a man. Indeed He knew what was in a man.](#)”⁶⁴In fact, even Yahshua having come to call wrongdoers is itself an exclusive and not inclusive statement. Sin is transgression of the law and only Israel was given the law of Moses - so on that account only an Israelite can be called to repent from the violation of those statutes. Otherwise, there is no sin, for as Paul explained, fault is not accounted to someone not under the law.⁶⁵

Yahshua was already calling the wrongdoers of Israel to repentance in the opening chapter of Mark, where He is recorded as having proclaimed throughout Galilee after the handing over of John the Baptist, “[The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of Yahweh has neared! Repent and have faith in the good message!](#)” (Mark 1:15). In exhorting repentance, Yahshua was indeed calling the wrongdoers, and He would later tell Peter and his companions, “[We should go elsewhere into the neighboring towns, in order that I shall proclaim there. For this reason have I come.](#)” (Mark 1:38). This proclamation is the same exhortation of repentance earlier in the gospel, and so having first said “[For this reason have I come](#)”, He then later says to the Pharisees “[I have not come to call the righteous, but wrongdoers!](#)”

This purpose of the Messiah was prophesied of in the 25th psalm, where David wrote “[Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.](#)”⁶⁶ [*The meek are those who humble themselves before God; absolutely contrary to the attitude of the scribes here.*]

The most eminent example of repentance is in Paul of Tarsus, who was rescued from his former ignorance to follow Christ. He later understood that the mercy and repentance given to him illustrated how any Israelite no matter how wretched or profligate could repent and receive the same:

1 Timothy 1:15-16 [Trustworthy is this saying, and worthy of all acceptance: that Christ Yahshua came into the Society to deliver wrongdoers, of which I am first, but for this reason have I been shown mercy: in order that first by me would Yahshua Christ exhibit all forbearance for a pattern of those who are going to believe in Him unto life eternal. \[Those who believe also keep the law, and in reward for the good works which they do for their brethren they are resurrected into everlasting life instead of everlasting shame - Daniel 12:2\]](#)

Yahshua explained these things with a short and succinct parable, saying “[The strong have no need of a physician, but the sick do have. I have not come to call the righteous, but wrongdoers!](#)”. In the fourth part of this commentary, titled *Plastering the Bruises*, we explained how sickness is often acquainted with sin and chastisement in the prophets. There we discussed how the lifting of Simon’s mother-in-law’s fever symbolized the curses for mother Israel’s wrongdoing and the forgiveness thereof.

If the Pharisees actually upheld the commandments of Yahweh instead of the traditions of men, then there wouldn’t have been as much rampant sickness among the people, and John the Baptist wouldn’t have had to smooth the stubborn mountain of Zion into an obedient plain ready to receive Christ. The failure of the shepherds of Israel across time is illustrated in Ezekiel and demonstrates how a Physician is absolutely necessary for Israel:

Ezekiel 34:2-4 [Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have](#)

⁶⁴ John 2:25

⁶⁵ Romans 5:13

⁶⁶ Psalm 25:8-9

ye healed that which was sick (*κακῶς in the LXX - same as Mark 2:17*), neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

Because the shepherd's failed to uphold the law and defend the flock, Yahweh says that He Himself will seek out His sheep as a Shepherd and heal them:

Ezekiel 34:12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, [...] **15-16** I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Notice that Yahweh says He will do this Himself, but then later identifies as the Shepherd as David, where He says "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it."⁶⁷ The answer is that Yahshua is both the root (Father) and the branch (descendant) of David - He is Yahweh God! And so with Yahshua, the Judge, Lawgiver, King, and Shepherd of Israel coming to gather and bind up his sick and broken sheep, we see a prophecy of Isaiah which still awaits an ultimate fulfillment in our future:

Isaiah 33:22-24 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us. Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

Yahshua healed the sick of His people in an eternal sense through His propitiation on the cross, and in an immediate sense through teaching them righteousness.

The Physician's toolkit is the law which guides men towards repentance. Therefore those who are already following their Spirit instead of their flesh are already obedient to the law have no need for someone to illustrate it to them, and that is what Christ means when He says "the strong have no need of a physician". The law is laid down for wrongdoers, the sick, so that they can know what it is they must repent from in order to be healthy:

1 Timothy 1:9-11 Knowing this, that law is not laid down for righteous, but for lawless and unruly, impious and wrongful, unholy and profane, patricidal and matricidal, murderous, fornicating, homosexual, kidnapping, lying, falsely swearing men, along with anything else which is contrary to sound instruction according to the good message of the honor of the Blessed Yahweh, which I have been entrusted with.

The law is good and it comes from Yahweh, who is a Spirit, and those who have that racial Spirit which He breathed into the race of Adam can thus hear the voice of their Father and abide in His commandments. For that reason Paul said that the "law is spiritual"⁶⁸ But the Spirit is sown with the flesh at conception and therefore Adamic men have a dual nature which presents them with a choice: to either live in the flesh or to live in the Spirit. Therefore "if you are led by the Spirit, you are under no law"⁶⁹ because the "law is not laid down for righteous, but for lawless and unruly,".

But the broken vessels of mixed heritage cannot hold that genetic Spirit as they do not have the proper racial seed which passes it on. As we've said, these Pharisees murmuring to Yahshua's students were "those making divisions, animals, not having the Spirit",⁷⁰ and Jude calls this wicked race *animals* in the most literal sense. Not having the Adamic Spirit, they are no different from the beasts of the earth such as cattle and bears, except that they are worse - being born from corruption.

⁶⁷ Ezekiel 34:23-24

⁶⁸ Romans 7:14 [...]

⁶⁹ Galatians 5:18

⁷⁰ Jude 1:19 [...]

Being a corrupt animal born without the Adamic Spirit is a matter of birth, because the Spirit is sown with the flesh, and so Peter speaking of the same wicked race described by Jude said that they are “born as natural irrational animals”⁷¹ Such bastards only have one choice: to live in the flesh. They are unable to abide in the commandments, because doing so requires the Adamic Spirit.

That is why there is no record of these scribes of the Pharisees in Mark 2 being called to repentance, nor does Yahshua extend any offer for them to eat with Him, but rather He apparently stayed away from them. As He taught, “You should not give that which is holy to the dogs, nor should you cast your pearls before swine, lest they shall trample them with their feet and turning they would rend you to pieces!”⁷² Teaching the law to animals is both profane and vain.

Lastly, where Yahshua says that the *strong* have no need for a Physician, it should remind us that we are only healthy when we abide in the commandments of our Father and live according to the way He created us to live. The Greek word *ισχύω*⁷³ can even bear the meaning of *whole*, and only when we strive to live our lives to their truest potential can we experience one of the many fruits of the Spirit, which is the pure feeling of genuine joy.⁷⁴ This is the feeling of being whole and healthy, as Solomon wrote in Proverbs, as it reads in the Septuagint, “My son, keep my words, and hide with thee my commandments. My son, honour the Lord, and thou shalt be strong; and fear none but him: keep my commandments, and thou shalt live; and keep my words as the pupils of thine eyes. And bind them on thy fingers, and write them on the table of thine heart.”⁷⁵ And then Joshua son of Sirach, though not inspired, echoed Solomon’s words where he wrote “Blessed is he that shall be exercised in these things; and he that layeth them up in his heart shall become wise. For if he do them, he shall be strong to all things: for the light of the Lord leadeth him, who giveth wisdom to the godly. Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever. Amen, Amen.”⁷⁶

Those who live degenerate lifestyles are inevitably depressed and entangled in all sorts of folly—that is the lot they have chosen and their antidepressant sorcery will not help them out of it. They are not well. They are not healthy. But they can change. They can repent. And they can recover.

We should end this by remembering once more that this exchange happened under the roof of Matthew, the son of Alphaeus, whose name is believed to derive from the Hebrew *changing*. When we repent we change our soiled garments into clean ones - leaving behind the frail and sickly life to walk in white with vigor and vitality. As Christ said to the assembly in Sardis in His Revelation, “But you have a few names in Sardeis which have not soiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me in white, because they are worthy.”⁷⁷

In our next presentation, we will explore another great transition: the shift in understanding that comes with new wine and the necessity of placing it into new wineskins for it to abide firmly.

Praise Yahweh the God of Israel, and thank you for reading.

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⁷¹ 2 Peter 2:12 [...]

⁷² Matthew 7:6

⁷³ #G2480

⁷⁴ Galatians 5:22

⁷⁵ Proverbs 7:1-3 (LXX)

⁷⁶ Sirach 50:28-29

⁷⁷ Revelation 3:4